



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 14, 2014

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Jolene Holgate | 928.380.4174  
Chrissy Largo | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

**Naabik'iyátí' Committee approves amending the term sheet  
for the proposed Gaming Compact with the State of New Mexico**

**WINDOW ROCK** – During a special meeting held on Monday, Naabik'iyátí' Committee members voted 16-0 to approve Legislation No. 0002-14, to amend Resolution No. NABIMA-14-13, a term sheet for an amendment to the proposed Gaming Compact between the Navajo Nation and the State of New Mexico.

The Naabik'iyátí' Committee initially approved the term sheet on March 8, 2013 which was later approved by the New Mexico State Legislative Committee on Compacts. However, the Compact was not introduced to the Senate floor for a vote during last year's state legislative session.

Chair of the Naabik'iyátí' Committee's Gaming Task Force Subcommittee Council Delegate LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland), said that a result of concerns brought forth by various New Mexico gaming tribes and by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Naabik'iyátí' Committee members determined that it was necessary to reopen negotiations to amend the proposed Gaming Compact.

Among the concerns addressed were revenue sharing as it relates to "free play" in casinos, the removal of all references to Class II gaming within the Compact, the removal of internet gaming provisions, contributions to problem gambling programs, and the number of gaming facilities the Nation is allowed to operate within the State of New Mexico, according to Delegate Bates.

One of the subcommittee's top priorities when negotiating the Compact, said Delegate Bates, was to secure five Class III gaming facilities for the Navajo Nation. Currently, the Nation operates two Class III facilities, which include Fire Rock Navajo Casino and Northern Edge Navajo Casino.

"The state—throughout negotiating from the very beginning—up until the eleventh hour, wanted the Nation to reduce its [gaming] facilities all the way down to three," stated Delegate Bates. "The gaming task force team stayed firm from day one, all the way up to where we are today."

According to the term sheet, the Nation will be able to establish a third Class III gaming facility after 5 years from the date of execution of the Compact, a fourth after 10 years, and a fifth after 15 years. In addition, the Nation is required to have 15,000 enrolled members residing in New Mexico for each additional facility.

Delegate Bates also explained that the Nation was able to lower the percentage of revenue sharing from 10.25% to 10% from years 2015-2030, as a result of recent negotiations. Beginning in 2030, the percentage would increase to 10.75% until the expiration of the Compact in 2037.

Delegate Bates reaffirmed the Nation's position that the negotiated Compact is fair to both the State of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation.

The current Compact, which the Nation signed onto in 2003, is scheduled to expire in June 2015. Along with the Navajo Nation, four other tribes in New Mexico are also a party to the 2001 Compact.

Upon approval by the Committee on Compacts, the proposed Compact will be forwarded to the New Mexico State Legislature for consideration. The legislature, however, cannot offer any further amendments to the Compact.

If approved, the Compact will then be submitted to the U.S. Department of the Interior for final approval, as required by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

Near the conclusion of the meeting, Naabik'iyátí' Committee members voted to enter executive session to discuss Legislation No. 0003-14, sponsored by Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat), which seeks the removal of Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) from his position as Speaker of the Council.

The item was added to the committee's agenda at the start of the meeting, however, several delegates questioned whether or not the legislation had completed the five-day comment period, as mandated by Navajo Nation law.

The item failed to receive a motion to bring forth the legislation for discussion.

Following the three-hour executive session, Speaker Naize said he remains optimistic, adding that he admires the perseverance and collectiveness displayed by the Council members during this time of adversity.

"When our Diné people were forced into captivity in Fort Sumner, our leaders stood united and remained strong throughout," stated Speaker Naize. "It is that same type of dignity and resilience within our current leaders that will maintain unity and prosperity amongst Council and will continue to move this Nation forward in a positive direction."

The Naabik'iyátí' Committee has yet to take official action on Legislation No. 0003-14. The Navajo Nation Council serves as the final authority for the legislation.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)